



PD 360.665 FAMILY PLANNING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Policy Case Studies - Iran, China and India

W. Henry Mosley

Iran

Family planning in Iran was initially introduced by Shah Reza Pahlavi in 1967 and was moderately successful, but suffered a severe setback with the revolution and establishment of the Islamic Republic in 1979. Initial post-revolutionary policies were pronatalist, but over the next few years, the Islamic regime revised their views and put in place policies and strategies that have now produced one of the most successful family planning programs in the developing world. Iran provides a valuable study of how technical experts can work with religious authorities to develop a program that, while still having some limitations, is appropriate to the local cultural context and therefore widely accepted.

Questions for reflection:

1. What factors contributed to the initial rejection by the new Islamic regime of the family planning program established by Shah Pahlavi?
2. Contrast the development approach of Shah Pahlavi with that of the new regime.
3. What were the two strategies of the technical experts in the Budget and Planning Organization to build a consensus for family planning and how was the debate brought to public attention?
4. What were the major elements of the “Islamic Population Policy”? Would this policy be acceptable/appropriate for a non-Islamic country? Why or why not?
5. How was the population policy and family planning program disseminated nationally?

China

(From the introduction by Greenhalgh) “ ...in the years 1978–83.... just after the historic third plenum of the party’s Eleventh Central Committee shifted the nation’s focus to socialist modernization, ...population became a crucial object of Chinese science and a sustained object of Chinese governance. In those six years, population science was reborn, the one-child policy was created, and that policy was strictly enforced in a massive sterilization campaign whose unanticipated political and bodily effects were so harmful to China’s rural people and so intolerable to China’s leaders that the policy and its enforcement were significantly

revamped (Greenhalgh 1986). In this article I delve into one critical slice of this larger story: the scientific construction of China's population problem and its optimal policy solution." (p.165)

Questions for reflection:

1. What happened to the study of population during the era of Mao?
2. What changes occurred with the transformation of population studies from a social science to a mathematical science?
3. What is meant by a "virtual population crisis"?
4. Describe some examples of how the "rhetoric of science" was able to be so influential in political and policy circles?
5. How did the scientific and political processes combine to lead to the one-child policy?

India

(From the Donaldson paper) "The evolution policy on target setting is an illustration of society-wide changes that are taking place throughout India and in many other countries. These changes are leading to more decentralized political and administrative structures, and more client-centered bureaucracies. Understanding the forces that led to changes in India's family planning target system provides a sense of the complexity of policy changes in the health and population sector and in the larger society as well." (p. 97)

Questions for reflection:

1. What is meant by targets, how were targets set, and how were they used programmatically?
2. Briefly describe the five factors that were considered instrumental in moving India to adopt a target free approach.
3. What other background forces played a role in moving India to move away from targets?
4. How well is the target free approach being accepted at the local/operational level?

Individual Written Assignment (2-3 pages, double spaced)

Iran and China have both experienced political revolutions, but came out with very different, though highly centralized political systems. In both cases they moved to strong anti-natalist policies on the basis of “scientific” evidence. India, by contrast has had a long history of democratic traditions.

Answer one of the two questions below:

1. **Compare and contrast** the Chinese and Iranian population policy formulation processes from the following perspectives:
 - a. What were the some key similarities and differences in how the concerned scientists framed the population issues for the political leadership and for the public?
 - b. Family planning programs should be only one component of a human rights/reproductive rights movement. Which country would you consider gave a higher regard to human rights in developing its family planning program, and why?
2. **Compare and contrast** the Iranian and Indian population policy formulation processes from the following perspectives:
 - a. What were some of the similarities and differences in how population issues were brought to the attention of the wider community and the policymakers in order to generate debate and discussion.
 - b. How important do you believe that the perspectives of the international community – professionals, international organizations, governments and donors – are in influencing national decision making on population policies.

Required Readings :

Donaldson, PJ. The elimination of contraceptive acceptor targets and the evolution of population policy in India. *Population Studies* 56: 97-110, 2002.

Hoodfar H and Assadpour S. The politics of population policy in the Islamic Republic of Iran. *Studies in Family Planning* 31 (1): 19-34, 2000.

Greenhalgh, S. Science, modernity and the making of China's one-child policy. *Population and Development Review* 29 (2): 163-196, 2003.

Recommended Readings:

Aghajanian, A and Merhyar, AH. Fertility, contraceptive use and family planning program activity in the Islamic Republic of Iran. *International Family Planning Perspectives* 25(2): 98-102, 1999.

Gertler P, Molyneaux JW. How economic development and family planning programs combined to reduce Indonesian fertility. *Demography* 31 (1):33-63, 1994.

Hull TH. Fertility decline in Indonesia: an institutionalist interpretation. *International Family Planning Perspectives* 13:90-95, 1987.

Obono, O. Cultural diversity and population policy in Nigeria. *Population and Development Review* 29 (1): 103-111, 2003.

Warwick DP. *Bitter Pills: Population Policies and Their Implementation in Eight Developing Countries*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Warwick DP. Culture and the management of family planning programs. *Studies in Family Planning* 19:1-18, 1988.

Warwick DP. The Indonesian family planning program: Government influence and client choice. *Population and Development Review* 12:453-490, 1986.

United Nations. *The Right to Choose. Reproductive Rights and Reproductive Health*. State of the World Population, 1997.